1 Introduction

1.1 Aims

Most research in critical discourse studies (CDS) focuses on social power abuse and not on the resistance against such domination. Similarly, most of my own earlier critical studies deal with the discursive reproduction of racism as a form of ethnic domination, and not with antiracist discourse challenging prevailing discriminatory practices and prejudice. By examining the history and some of the properties of antiracist text and talk, this book is a necessary complement to my earlier analyses of discursive racism in politics, the media and education.

The first aim of this book is to develop a new theory of antiracism as a social movement of resistance and solidarity, consisting of antiracist practices based on antiracist knowledge, attitudes and ideologies. Crucial among antiracist practices is antiracist discourse by which antiracist social cognition is acquired in the first place, and which hence is responsible for the very reproduction of antiracism as personal and organized resistance or solidarity.

The second aim is to systematically study some of the properties and the history of antiracist discourse in the USA and in Western Europe since Antiquity, and especially since the first antislavery and abolitionist movements, first by Spanish priests, Quakers and black writers, until the Civil Rights Movement and Black Lives Matter in the USA, and contemporary antiracist movements in Europe. Part of this long history is also the discursive struggle against antisemitism, especially by Jewish scholars in Germany.

1.2 Antiracism

Antiracism as a movement of resistance and solidarity is as diverse and complex as racism as a system of domination. From the antislavery movement in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries until the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s and Black Lives Matter today in the USA, and from active resistance by slaves and quilombos of runaway slaves to the Movimento Negro and affirmative action policies in Brazil, antiracist practice has been a consistent

feature of the history of resistance against racist oppression, exclusion, marginalization and other forms of social domination and inequality. Blacks have played a prominent role in the history of antiracist resistance (Zamalin, 2019; see also Chapters 5 and 6). The same is true for the resistance by Jewish scholars against antisemitism, especially since the nineteenth century in Germany (see Chapter 7; for a general and global perspective of resistance against racism and xenophobia, see, e.g., Harrison, 2005).

To understand the complexity of such resistance and solidarity, we need to develop a theory that accounts for its social practices and mental representations, in general, and for antiracist discourse, in particular. We do so in a way that resembles our theoretical account of racism as a system of domination, but with the crucial difference that antiracism as resistance presupposes the system of racism, and not vice versa.

Racism as a system of ethnic or "racial" domination consists of two subsystems, one of racist social practices – discrimination – and one of racist social cognition – prejudice and ideologies – underlying such practices. Crucial among racist practices is racist discourse, because it is mainly through discourse that ethnic prejudice is acquired, and discrimination is both enacted and legitimated. Racist prejudice and discrimination are not innate or "natural," but socially learned, especially through a complex system of everyday, informal and institutional discourse, and other forms of interaction and communication in context. Especially public discourse, for example, in politics, the media and education, is a primary means of the acquisition of racist social cognition, because it is ubiquitous and authoritative and hence reaches most of the population – today also due to its reproduction and amplification in social media. It follows that those in control of public discourse, the symbolic elites, are primarily responsible for the reproduction of racism. They preformulate the ethnic attitudes and ideologies that spread through society at large, and that may be adopted by parts of the dominant white population (Van Dijk, 1993).

If racism is a system of ethnic domination, antiracism is first of all a global and historical macromovement of resistance against such domination. This movement also has two major dimensions, one of antiracist social practices and one of antiracist social cognition. Just like racism, antiracism is not innate or natural but learned, and just like racist prejudice, antiracist attitudes and ideologies are largely acquired by discourse. But unlike racist discourse, antiracist discourse is not dominant, despite its recent expansion after Black Lives Matter. As public discourse, it is nondominant in politics, the media, education – and today in social media and the internet – and formulated by symbolic elites that are themselves hardly dominant, as is the case for minority leaders, politicians, journalists and scholars and their white allies.

Also, because it is not dominant among the symbolic elites, antiracist discourse has little influence on the population at large and least on the white

population that benefits from the advantages of racist inequality. This explains why racism as a system of domination has survived centuries and remains prevalent today, as has been powerfully shown in the discourses and other contentious forms of resistance of Black Lives Matter (see also Solomos, 2020). Indeed, it is precisely because of this resistance that at the time of this writing antiracism as a movement has become more widespread today, both in the USA as well as internationally. But it would be too optimistic to conclude that antiracism now has become mainstream or dominant.

As is the case for other systems of social inequality and domination, such as those of gender and class, social change is slow, and often marginal or cosmetic, on the one hand, because fundamental group ideologies and attitudes are involved, which may need decades to change significantly among the majority of the population. On the other hand, racism is abuse of power, and such power and its privileges are seldom voluntarily relinquished or shared, unless challenged by powerful social movements and active resistance, as was the case in South Africa's system of Apartheid, and during and after the Civil Rights and Black Lives Matter Movements in the USA (for studies of contemporary racisms in the world, see Solomos, 2020).

Given the crucial role of the symbolic elites and their control over public discourse, antiracist social change requires that significant and influential fractions of these elites engage in, or allow, alternative discourses advocating or prescribing social equality. Our separate study of the history of antiracist discourse in Brazil, and a case study of the debate on quotas for black students in the Brazilian parliament, is premised on these theoretically based hypotheses (Van Dijk, 2020a).

The history of antiracist discourse in this book requires a broad and flexible theory of antiracism. By present standards and values, early discourse against slavery is hardly antiracist and may feature many stereotypes about blacks, until late in the nineteenth century. In the next chapter we therefore must formulate a theory of antiracism, as is the case for the theory of democracy or feminism, which assumes gradual historical changes due to increasingly strict criteria and values of equality and justice, and especially due to increasing resistance, always depending on the social, political and cultural context.

1.3 Antiracist Discourse

Antiracism is engaged in by many forms of antiracist practice. Since Antiquity, slaves have resisted their enslavement in many ways. Blacks before and during Jim Crow in the USA have participated in meetings, marches and occupations. Indigenous people have challenged and repelled the encroachment by Europeans and other settlers on their lands and cultures. Refugees and other migrants, especially in the USA and Europe, have organized against prejudice, discrimination

and other forms of exclusion. Much of such embodied resistance is nonverbal and often it is the only efficient way to resist.

Yet, as is the case for all social movements, a crucial part of most resistance and solidarity is discursive, even as parts of marches or occupations, slogans, banners, songs and personal storytelling may be part of collective protest. The organization of resistance needs planning, programs, meetings, assemblies, publicity and persuasive public discourse, as well as media coverage and official decision-making and policies by parliaments and governments reacting to resistance. Experiences of oppression and marginalization, as represented in personal mental models, are shared with other members or communicated to a large audience by many multimodal discourse genres, such as personal stories, press reports, novels, movies and increasingly by the social media. Critical analysis of discrimination and proposals for new policies require discursive formulation in manifestos, speeches, reports and programs.

The only efficient way other participants, as well as their opponents or the public at large, can know what contestants want, and what else they have "in mind," is through text and talk. Hence, this book does not deal with the many forms of nonverbal resistance but focuses on discourse, both of the targets of racism, as well as of those who are solidary with them.

Since antiracism presupposes racism, antiracist discourse often presupposes racist discourse as a racist social practice among others as well as the expression of underlying racist attitudes and ideologies. Racist discourse is ideological and hence polarized by underlying cognitions positively representing the ingroup and negatively the outgroup – typically summarized by the pronouns Us vs. Them. Antiracist discourse enacts counterpower and hence is also polarized by ingroup–outgroup representations in cognition and discourse, but this time in the interest of the dominated.

Given this empirically based theory of ideological discourse, in general, and of racist and antiracist discourse, in particular, an analysis of antiracist discourse may be predicted to find a systematic negative representation of racist practices and a positive account of the resistance against, or solidarity with, such practices.

Antiracist discourse, however, is not only negative or critical but also has important positive characteristics. Ideological discourse enhances not only the negative properties of the outgroup, but also the positive characteristics of the ingroup. Negative characterizations of blacks in racist discourse may thus be challenged, not only by delegitimizing them, but by emphasizing their positive characteristics, successes and contributions to the nation. For instance, against claims or presuppositions of lacking qualities of black students entering the universities by a system of quotas, antiracist discourse celebrates the academic successes of such students, as is the case for parliamentary debates in Brazil about affirmative action. In the same way African American activists during the

Civil Rights Movement in the USA used the slogan "Black is Beautiful" to celebrate the many contributions of black people. Jewish intellectuals in Germany in the nineteenth century celebrated Jewish identity, patriotism and other positive qualities in reply to increasingly nationalist antisemitism and exclusion by German professors. The women who founded Black Lives Matter repeatedly emphasize their love and admiration of their communities.

Unlike racist discourse, antiracist discourse is systematically positive in the sense of enhancing the importance and necessity of democratic values of justice and equality. It may do so by comparisons with other countries, by invoking international organizations and authorities, by legal argumentation, as well as by enhancing national progress of a democratic system based on racial equality.

We may ask how prevalent antiracist discourse is today. According to the contemporary literature on racism and our own sociopolitical and discursive analysis, we do not view such discourse as dominant. It is true that antiracist discourse may be ubiquitous and part of government policies and commercial advertising (see, e.g., Zamalin, 2019: 6). Constitutions, official policies, party programs, educational curricula and corporate discourse may variously claim to be against racism and in favor of ethnic and racial equality (for a critical assessment of corporate antiracism, see, e.g., Blake, Ioanide, & Reed, 2019). Such is also the case today, in the summer of 2020, after the impressive national and global reactions of solidarity with Black Lives Matter after the assassination of George Floyd by a police officer in Minneapolis.

However, at least some of these antiracist reactions are forms of positive self-presentation, official discourse or sales promotion. Research shows that everyday reality "on the ground" is often inconsistent with such official discourse or ideals, and not only at the extremist, racist right. It shows that many forms of racist discourse, prejudice and discrimination remain prevalent in all domains and at all levels of society. The many negative (official and social) media and political reactions to Black Lives Matter in the USA today also show that racism is definitely not a thing of the past.

Our theory of elite discourse (Van Dijk, 1993) implies that, if the elites – and their discourses and other practices – were consistently antiracist, such would be the dominant tendency in society, and vice versa. Both the history and the contemporary forms of racist and antiracist discourse support this thesis, as may be obvious during the presidency of Trump in the USA, the political power of Salvini in Italy, Orbán in Hungary or Bolsonaro in Brazil, on the one hand, or of Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern in New Zealand, on the other hand. They give the bad or the good examples and legitimate broader racist or antiracist activities and discourse.

It depends on leading elites of the governments and their agencies, the media, the schools, the universities and the business corporations whether good or bad examples are shared throughout society. Even with the contemporary popular

access to the social media, these elites have prevalent access to, and control over, most public discourse and hence indirectly over the knowledge, opinions, attitudes and ideologies of the public at large – social cognitions that in turn crucially control (anti)racist discourse and other practices.

The history of antiracist discourse in this book shows that such discourse was generally in opposition against dominant discourse and practices. This does not mean that such opposition did not have influence on official policies and legislation, as has been shown in abolition, the Civil Rights Movement, UNESCO declarations, as well as postwar policies, institutions and movements against racism, antisemitism or xenophobia.

1.4 The Broader Theoretical Framework: Discourse – Cognition – Society

The broader theoretical basis of this study is a multidisciplinary, discourse analytical framework, relating discourse structures to societal structures via a sociocognitive interface. Unlike critical approaches that assume direct mutual relations between discourse and society, our theoretical framework is premised on the thesis that structures of society and discourse are of a different nature so that no direct mutual influence between them is possible.

This means that language users can produce or understand discourse under the influence of societal structures such as racism only through their mental representation of such societal structures, for instance in personal mental models of ethnic events, or more general knowledge, attitudes or ideologies shared by a community or group.

Both racism and antiracism are "nothing personal," in the sense that both prejudice and discriminatory practices are engaged in only as group members and based on socially shared attitudes and ideologies. Unlike in much traditional theory, ethnic prejudice is not defined in terms of personal bigotry, but as shared ideologically based attitudes (for the social psychology of prejudice and antiracism, see Eberhardt & Fiske, 1998).

The fundamental societal nature of racism and antiracism and of their defining cognitions and practices does not mean that there is no individual racist or antiracist action or discourse. However, such individual agency involves the uses or application of socially shared cognitions, much in the same way as language users may individually use or apply the socioculturally shared rules of the language in their unique personal text or talk. There are no individual languages, but only individual *uses* of languages, and as a speaker one always speaks as a member of a linguistic community. Our sociocognitive theory of (anti)racism and (anti)racist discourse explains in detail how social and political structures are, on the one hand, related to socially shared cognition, such as

knowledge, attitudes and ideologies, and, on the other hand, related to individual social practices and discourse through an interface of personal mental models.

1.5 The Societal Structure of Antiracism: Social Movements

If we want to relate antiracist discourse to societal structures – via a sociocognitive interface – we also need to be more explicit about these societal structures. First of all, as emphasized earlier, antiracist discourse is a form of antiracist social practice among others and accounts for the societal microlevel of antiracism. Yet such individual practices of group members also need analysis of higher levels of the societal order, such as those of groups, organizations, institutions or the State. Antiracist practice is seldom merely individual and often – if not mostly – engaged in by more or less organized collectives of social actors. From slave revolts and the abolitionist movements in the Americas, until the Civil Rights and Black Lives Matter Movements in the USA and the Movimento Negro in Brazil, or SOS Racisme in France and Spain today, antiracist action should also be characterized in terms of the properties of a social movement with a long history (Hage, 2015).

The social sciences, and especially sociology and political science, have developed theories and methods for the study of social movements, and part of our theory of antiracism integrates such insights. It does so critically, because most social movement theory has ignored the details of contemporary theories of discourse and cognition as crucial dimensions of collective action. However, there are many aspects of a social movement approach to antiracism that are relevant for a multidisciplinary theory, such as coalitions, antiracist organizations, networks, leadership, recruitment and mobilization, membership, meetings, protest repertoires, opportunity structures and much more. Also, there are studies of antiracist methodologies in other disciplines, for example, in education, where antiracist teaching has been a prominent topic for many years (see, e.g., Sefa Dei & Singh Johal, 2005).

Our theory of antiracist discourse is premised on the fact that antiracism must be defined as a historical and global social (macro)movement, consisting of more specific and local social movements in many countries and at different moments of history. Most of these movements show cooperation between discriminated groups and their active resistance, on the one hand, and concerned or solidary persons or organizations of dominant society, on the other hand. This means that our conception of antiracism as a social movement must necessarily be broad and not be limited to the active resistance of those who are oppressed or marginalized. Social change is more complex and also requires activities, cooperation and compliance of dissident fractions of the white symbolic elites, such as scholars, journalists, teachers and politicians. Part of

antiracist discourse, as we will see in the next chapters, is discourse of these solidary elites.

1.6 Critical Analysis?

Studies of antiracist discourse do not aim to criticize, challenge or oppose such discourse, but to provide insights that may be socially relevant for the discursive struggle against racism. Instead of criticism, hence, such analyses are first of all a contribution of solidarity, as a form of participation in the system of resistance.

Solidarity, however, does not mean lack of (self-)criticism. Resistance can be more or less efficient, and it is also the case of antiracist discourse. Hence, critical antiracist discourse analysis may be socially self-critical by providing normatively based evaluations of the structures, strategies of antiracist talk, for instance, by challenging its arguments or its contextual appropriateness. If the high-level norms and values of a just and egalitarian society are in conflict with actual antiracist talk, such talk may and should also be criticized, even when its aims are antiracist.

It is in this sense that critical discourse analysis may be solidary, on the one hand, but at the same time critical of text or talk that violates fundamental norms of a democratic society. It is partisan, as part of the antiracist struggle, but always critical by more fundamental ethical standards or in view of improving antiracist discourse and action. This does not mean, obviously, that the (antiracist) study of antiracist discourse should not be criticized, for example, for theoretical or methodological reasons. Such a perspective is fundamentally different from the racist or reactionary attacks of antiracism and antiracist discourse, that is, of the *anti-antiracist discourse* of Alt-Right or White Supremacist movements and their advocates in the USA, Europe and Australia (for critical analysis, see, e.g., Lentin, 2018).

1.7 My Previous Research

This book presupposes and applies fifty years of research on discourse and forty years on racism and racist discourse. In order to avoid multiple self-references to relevant earlier books in this and the next chapters, I briefly do so here for a selection of books, where I developed many of the theoretical and analytical notions used in this book.

Notions of the theory of discourse were first developed in my PhD thesis, *Some Aspects of Text Grammars* (1972) and in *Text and Context* (1977), such as the semantic notions of discourse coherence and macrostructures defining global topics of discourse. The multidisciplinary theory of macrostructures in discourse, cognition and action was developed in *Macrostructures* (1980).

Mental models, and more generally the cognitive processes involved in discourse production and comprehension, were introduced in my book with Walter Kintsch, *Strategies of Discourse Comprehension* (1983). *Ideology* (1998) offers a multidisciplinary theory of ideology – with special focus on discourse and cognition – which defines the general strategy of what I call the "ideological square": emphasizing Our Good Things and Their Bad Things and de-emphasizing Our Bad Things and Their Good Things when ideology is expressed in discourse.

Many of my studies of public discourse are about news in the press, for example, as published in *News as Discourse* (1988) and *News Analysis* (1988).

The multidisciplinary theory of communicative contexts was developed in *Discourse and Context* (2008) and *Society and Discourse* (2009). The fundamental role of knowledge in discourse and cognition was studied in *Discourse and Knowledge* (2014). Finally, the general framework of critical discourse studies, also for the analysis of racist discourse, developed since the 1980s, was published in *Discourse and Power* (2008).

My first studies in English on racist discourse were published in *Prejudice in Discourse* (1984) about conversations on immigrants in the Netherlands and in *Communicating Racism* (1987) on conversations about immigrants in California. The coverage of minorities and immigrants in the British press was analyzed in *Racism and the Press* (1991). The first decade of my studies of racist discourse in the press, textbooks and politics was summarized in *Elite Discourse and Racism* (1993), which also introduced the notion of "symbolic elites" and their prominent role in the reproduction of racism. The English translation of a study of racist discourse in Latin America was published in an edited book in 2009 (with contributions of colleagues from Mexico, Colombia, Venezuela, Brazil, Argentina and Chile). Most relevant for this book is finally the study *Antiracist Discourse in Brazil*, which analyzes the history of antiracist discourse in Brazil between the seventeenth and twenty-first centuries and the parliamentary debate on university quotas for black students. Instead of frequently referring to this book in the next chapters, all remarks on racism and antiracism in Brazil are based on this book and references given there.

Many of the notions of a multidisciplinary theory of social movements discussed in this and the next chapters are further being developed in a current project *Social Movements, Discourse and Cognition.*

These earlier publications are indebted to many authors of the following fields of my readings during the last fifty years: literary theory, linguistics, semiotics, pragmatics, philosophy of language and action, epistemology, cognitive and social psychology, cognitive science, sociology, anthropology, communication and media studies, and political science. Their work is referred to in the books mentioned earlier.

1.8 Limitations

As is the case for all books, this book also has many limitations and they need to be emphasized from the start with some explanation.

1.8.1 Theory

First of all, the theory of antiracism and antiracist discourse is in development and requires much more empirical analysis in order to warrant general statements about the discursive struggle against various kinds of racism across the centuries and across the world. Within a broader, multidisciplinary framework, our focus – as in my other work – is on discourse and this time specifically on the history of antiracist discourse. Though embedded in a multidisciplinary approach to social movements, the theory of this book does not develop this new theory of social movements and its discourse, which will be the task of a future book. Also, the theory of antiracism and antiracist discourse would need a more detailed political analysis. Although some political aspects, also in the examples, are mentioned, this book does not offer detailed political theory. For more detail, I refer to my book *Antiracist Discourse in Brazil*, which provides not only a history of antiracist discourse in Brazil, but also a detailed case study of parliamentary debates in Brazil on affirmative action (quotas) for black students, and hence of the more political aspects of antiracism and antiracist discourse.

1.8.2 Selection of Authors, Examples and Periods

A history of antiracist discourse through the ages, as summarized in one book, only allows for a small collection of examples among many thousands, of only a few authors among many hundreds, and of only a few periods. The discourse of each of the authors mentioned in this book deserves specialized and focused analyses in separate articles and monographs. Of some authors such studies have already been made by other scholars. This means that this book does not contribute to the specialized study of specific periods, authors and their discourses, but aims to provide, for the first time, general insight into the historical development of antiracist discourse and its structures. It uniquely combines many different authors and discourses against slavery, racism and antisemitism in different periods and thus offers a more general view of the continuities and changes of such discourse through the ages. Another limitation is the focus on antiracist discourse before 1945, with special interest for antiracist authors and less on antiracist organizations – which will be mentioned especially after 1945, as is the case for UNESCO, the Civil Rights Movement, postwar